

CHANDAMAMA

JUNE 1984

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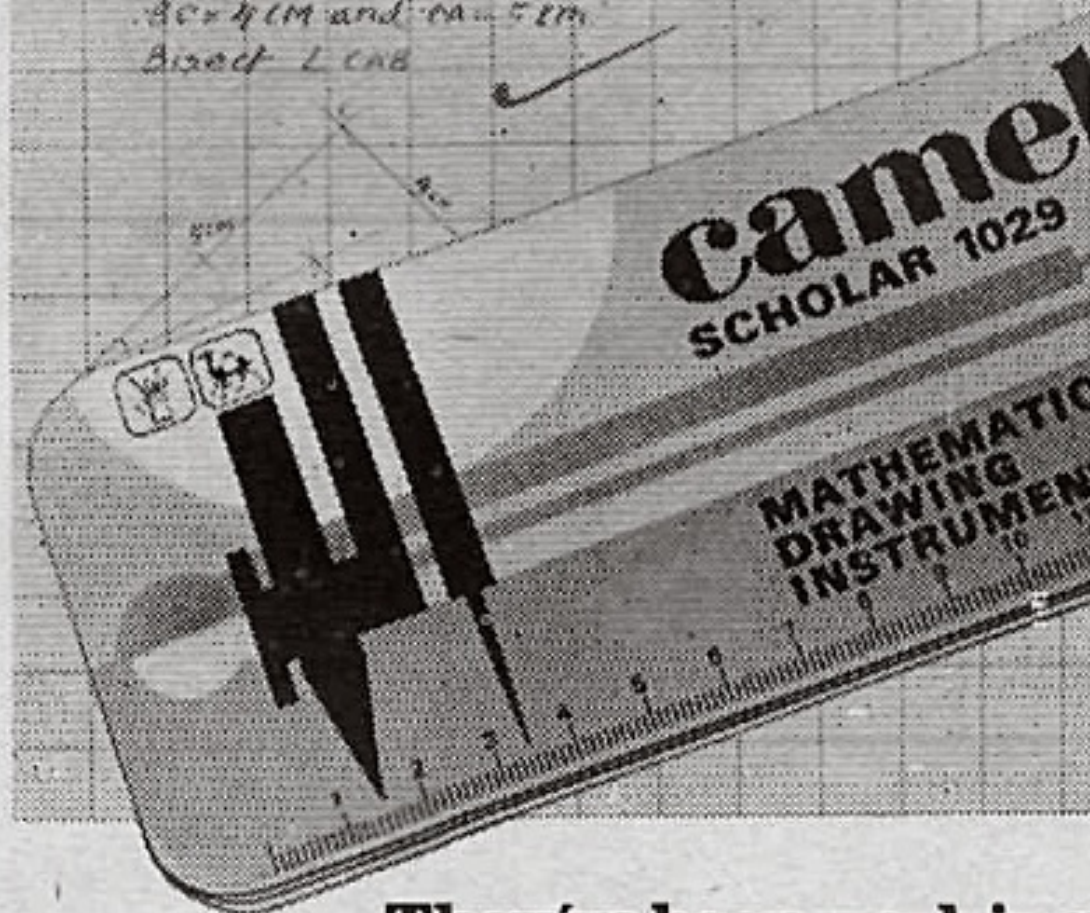


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NEXT ISSUE

- *The Hungry God of Fire—in the Story of Krishna*
- *The Secret—A Legend of India*
- *From Company to Crown—in Story of India*
- *A Case of Curiosity—An Arabian Night Story*
- *Treasure Island—A Pictorial Story*
- *And all the features like Newsflash, Let Us Know, Laugh with Nasruddin and a bunch of delightful stories!*



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AND Newsflash, Do you know, Let us know and more!



GRANDPA IN NEW ROLE

Rajesh remained so engrossed in writing something that Grandpa Chowdhury and Reena had to wait in the dining room for fifteen minutes for the boy to come and join them for lunch.

Rajesh, of course, regretted the delay, but explained that he had to submit an article for the school magazine that very afternoon. "Grandpa, will you once read what I've written?" he pleaded with the old professor.

The loving grandpa was happy to go through Rajesh's exercise. He saw that Rajesh had the gift of imagination, but there were flaws in the boy's writing.

When grandpa pointed out to Rajesh his errors, Rajesh clapped his hands and exclaimed, "Grandpa, won't you give me a few minutes at regular intervals to help me improve my English?"

"And me too!" said Reena.

We report their sessions beginning with the next issue. A new series, "Towards Better English", begins.

GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

परोक्षे कार्यहन्तारं प्रत्यक्षे प्रियवाचिनम् ।

वर्जयेत् तावृशं मित्रं विषकुम्भं पयोमुखम् ॥

Parokṣe kāryahantāram pratyakṣe priyavādinam

Varjayet tāvṛśam mitram viṣakumbham payomukham.

One who utters pleasing words before you but creates obstacles for you behind you, is like a jarful of poison with a layer of milk on the surface and must be avoided.

The Hitopadeshah

NEWS FLASH



Beware of the Killer

43,000,00 people die annually of cancer due to cigarette smoking, in the world. The largest number of deaths in this category occur in Asia.

The Most Dangerous Animal

Who is the most dangerous animal? The tiger? The Lion?

For 21 days the zoo in Sydney, Australia, gave an entirely different answer. It exhibited as "the most dangerous animal in the world" a human being. The reason was, man the inventor of nuclear bombs, pollutions etc, is capable of destroying the whole world. A famous drama director, Mike Mullins, let himself be caged for the exhibition.



The Expert Musicologist!

The latest expert to appear in the world of music 'lives' at the Birla Institute of Technology, Pilani. It is a computer, a specialist on musical modes or the *Ragas*. Name a *Raga* and it will give you a list of all the film songs sung in that *Raga*.

Do You Know?



Christian Heinrich Heineken (1721-1725) of Lubeck could talk when he was eight weeks old. He could recite passages from the Bible when one year of age. He lectured to an audience of professors and intellectuals on the mystery of the Fourth Dimension when he had just crossed four. He died soon thereafter out of boredom because he found no equal to talk to.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), the American statesman and philosopher, was the youngest son of a youngest son of a youngest son of a youngest son.



The star nearest to the earth (we are keeping the sun aside!), *Proxima Centauri*, is 24,800,000,000,000 miles away.

One light-year means 6,000,000,000,000 miles. Modern telescopes can show us galaxies that are 4000 million light years away!





LET US KNOW

Who is Rob Roy? What is his relation to Robinhood? Are they real characters?

*—Sushila Rao and friends,
New Delhi.*

Rob Roy is the nickname of Robert M'Gregor (1671-1734) of Scotland. Once a landlord harassed his wife and children. He decided to take revenge on the landlord and organised a small band of highwaymen. He plundered the unjust wealthy and distributed the booty among the needy. He is often called the Robinhood of Scotland. Sir Water Scott, the great Scottish writer, has written a book based on his character, entitled *Rob Roy*.

So, Rob Roy was an historical character, though many stories have mixed up with real events of his life.

The same cannot be said about Robin Hood. Most probably there was a heroic lad who adopted Sherwood Forest as his shelter, sometime in the 12th or the 13th century England. He was daring and kind and he and his companions risked their lives for rescuing people from danger and oppression. Later a number of stories were invented about him. He became the hero of numerous ballads and plays.

What does Christ mean?

*—Kumar Banerjee,
Silchar.*

Christ means "the anointed one." Although we say Jesus Christ, the correct way would be to say Jesus the Christ.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

(Even after Krishna left Mathura and settled down in Dwaraka, hostile beings tried to trouble him. Among them was Kal Yavan whom the fury of a sleeping king destroyed. Krishna befriended the Pandavas at the court of Panchala. In the meanwhile...)

THE RENDEZVOUS AT VIDARBHA

Wonderful was the kingdom of Vidarbha, fruitful trees and streams keeping it green and cool and a good king, Bhishmaka, ruling over it.

And much more wonderful than anything else was his daughter, Princess Rukmini.

That was hardly any wonder, for she was the incarnation of

Lakshmi, the eternal consort of Vishnu. Since Vishnu had incarnated as Krishna, she followed him in taking up a human form.

There were many who knew that Krishna was the Avatar of Vishnu, but nobody knew Rukmini's identity—at least nobody in Vidarbha. And she was too shy to declare it herself. We are not even sure if she was herself





conscious of it, for often gods and goddesses willingly forget themselves upon taking birth as human beings.

Nevertheless, even though nobody knew her to be a goddess incarnate, anyone whose eyes fell on her found it difficult to take them off her. She was divinely charming.

The beautiful lake-garden of King Bhishmaka's imposing palace was Rukmini's favourite retreat. Apart from her playful maids, swans, peacocks, deer and antelopes too eagerly looked forward to giving the princess their company. But lately the princess was often

seen choosing to be left alone and brood in solitude.

It was late in the afternoon. Proud peacocks unfurled their starry feathers and danced before the princess, but she took no notice of them. One of her companions was a singer non pareil—and she hummed the tunes which she knew to be Rukmini's favourite, but the sweet effort made no dent in her mood.

"O dear princess, a great wizard is on a visit to the city. He will be only too happy to perform before you!" the chief-maid informed her.

There was a twinkle of curiosity in Rukmini's eyes. "Wizard?" she asked. "What can he do?"

"Marvels, O Princess!"

"Can he bring me what I would like to have?"

"I think, he can, O Princess, for I saw him bringing a cat out of a cap in your father's court and I heard that once he even produced a monkey out of nothing!" replied the hopeful maid.

"Is that so? Well, I have a suggestion to make!"

"Why suggestion, Your Highness? Order me and it will be

done!" said the excited young lady.

"Begone and marry that monkey!" said the princess waving her hand and preparing to get lost in her thoughts again.

But the maid did not give up. "I wish there was a wizard who could produce the one whom our princess would like to marry!"

"How can any wizard do that, you foolish wench? Is not the one whom I would like to marry the greatest wizard of all?" commented the princess.

At last the clever maid got a clue to the secret of Rukmini's heart. It was only the other day that a singing mendicant described Krishna as the greatest wizard. Krishna's deeds as a child, his charm, the magnificence of his city that spread into the sea, had become the fond ballads of the bards. Indeed, whenever someone spoke of Krishna or sang of him, Princess Rukmini heard him with rapture!

The chief maid sat down near the princess. At a hint from her the other maids retreated.

Softly she said, "O dear Princess, I be cursed that it had not struck me earlier that none but



Krishna was the suitable match for you. But...."

The princess knew only too well what made her companion pensive. Rukmo, her eldest brother who was the crown-prince, was one of those who were awfully envious of Krishna. He grew furious with those who praised Krishna.

But Rukmini's chief maid acted swiftly. She spoke to the queen and the queen spoke to the king. Soon the princess and her fond parents met in the privacy of the queen's apartment.

"My child, sages say that Krishna is the Avatar of Vishnu.



Do you think that he will condescend to marry you?" asked the king.

"Father, I have a feeling that he will. The Lord can be approached in many a manner—as a guide or as a friend. I look upon him as my soul. My love is pure—so pure that no human being is capable of responding to it. I know for certain, though I do not know how I know it, that I am born with the sole purpose of serving Krishna," said Rukmini, her voice marked by calm confidence.

The king nodded. The queen looked moved. The princess

smiled.

But soon her smile gave way to a grim determination—when she learnt that her eldest brother, Rukmo, the crown-prince, had laughed at her desire to marry Krishna. He had chosen a dear friend of his, King Shisupal of Chedi, to marry her. Rukmo was a bully and he kept his parents cowed down.

The crown-prince plunged into making arrangements for Rukmini's marriage on the earliest auspicious day. Shisupal's joy knew no bound at the prospect of marrying the most beautiful princess.

"Shisupal intends to marry me, does he? He might succeed in touching my dead body—if at all!" Princess Rukmini was heard saying before her maids. Thereafter she rarely spoke. Her mother and others surmised that she had reconciled to the situation.

Vidarbha went festive. The rulers of Anga, Banga, Kalinga Pandya, Malava, Kekaya, Magadha, Kosala and many other kingdoms, the friends of Rukmo and Shisupal, arrived in the city. At last appeared amidst them the happy Shisupal, his arrival marked by beating of a

hundred drums, dance by horses and elephants and a grand feast thrown by Rukmo.

It was customary for the bride to visit the ancient shrine of Goddess Amba on the eve of the wedding. The royal guests lined along both sides of the road to have a glimpse of the princess. Escorting them stood their chums and servants. A few yards behind them stood crowds of citizens. Their faces glowed with joy and excitement as the slow procession of the palace damsels, surrounding their princess in her bridal grandeur, headed towards the shrine.

The shrine had been vacated by all, the chief priest excepting, for the princess and her companions to offer their prayers to the deity.

While sweet music was played outside, the princess bowed down to the Mother Goddess and kept gazing at her in silence. Nobody knew what indication she received, but she smiled after many days!

The royalty and the crowd still flanked the road, for their thirst for a view of the princess had increased after the first glimpse of hers. Soon the procession emerged from the tem-



ple. With bated breath they focused their attention on Rukmini once again.

To their delight they saw the princess, who had never raised her head while going towards the shrine, now looking at them.

"My lord, the princess is eager to locate you!" said a dear pal of Shisupal who stood among the dazzling array of royal guests. Shisupal's face brightened up. He gave a twist to his moustache.

Suddenly the princess broke away from the track and rapidly advanced towards a section of the crowd. Her maids naturally kept pace with her. Before any-

body could guess what was happening, one of the chariots parked behind the crowd was seen moving away.

It took time for those present to realise that one was missing from the group of young ladies! Gone in the chariot was Princess Rukmini.

Once this realisation came, it did not take long at least for the Crown Prince Rukmo to guess who the charioteer could be. In a deafening roar he asked his friends and soldiers to give a chase to the fleeing chariot.

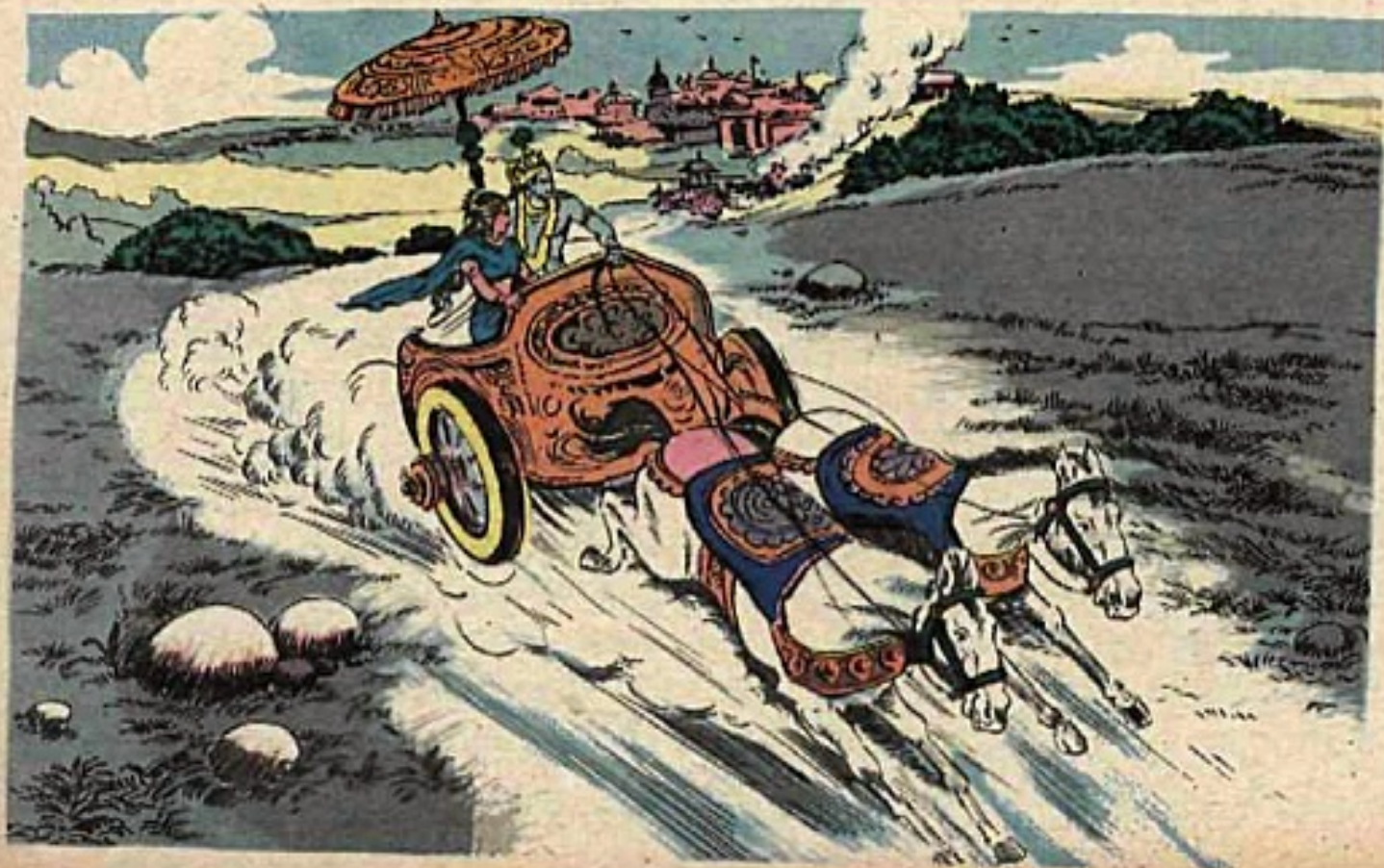
Shisupal's hand fell from his moustache and fell on his sword. He unsheathed it and, cutting down some of his chums

in his mad fury and madder hurry, he made a dash for the chariot.

But there was no way! Outside the city wall stood the mighty Balarama—with his formidable army. While fighting in vain, Rukmo, Shisupal and their allies saw Krishna's chariot disappearing on the horizon.

But for Rukmini's chief maid, nobody in the palace knew that she had sent a messenger to Krishna asking him to come to her rescue.

By sundown the triumphant Balarama left, leaving behind a gloomy city with many a prince sulking under a crushing humiliation.





A Bohemian Tale

IN THE SOUP!

Fritzl was a good farmer who had a wife called Liesi. They had a little baby called Kindli and a dog called Spitz.

Besides the patch of land on which they had built their house, they had a shed with one cow, two goats, three pigs and a few geese. They had to work very hard, which all farmers do in every land.

It was Fritzl's job to plough the ground, sow the seeds and hoe the weeds. When it was time to cut the hay, he did that too and he raked it and stacked it up in great sheaves to dry in the sun. When the sun shone down on the land, Fritzl felt quite hot as he worked in the open fields.

As for Liesi—her job was to keep the house clean, cook, churn the butter and to take care of the barn yard and, of course, the baby.

As you can see, it was quite a job and both were busy from morn till night. The trouble was that Fritzl felt that he was the only one who worked very hard. When he came home in the evenings he would sit down and mop his face and neck and make great noise to show how tired he was and how hard he had worked.

"What a hot day it was today and I certainly worked very hard. Little do you know, Liesi, how hard I work. You are a woman and you can do house-



work which is nothing at all, really," he said one day.

"Well, if that's what you think," said Liesi, "we will take turns, shall we? Tomorrow you do my work in the house and I shall go out into the fields and cut the hay."

Fritzl laughed. "Sure," he said, "Let's do that. We'll try it out."

He thought, "All I have to do is lie on the grass, keep an eye on our Kindli, churn the butter, fry a bit of meat and cook the soup. Huh, how easy!" He smiled to himself.

The next morning, Liesi woke up early and went out into the

fields with a scythe over her shoulder. Fritzl went to the kitchen, took some meat and put it in the pan to fry it. The pan sizzled and Fritzl felt the pleasure of doing something new. He was going to enjoy every moment of it. As his thoughts roamed pleasantly, he thought it would be nice to have a mug of cider with his meat. Apple cider would be the thing. He would have to get it from the cellar below the house. So he set the pan on the edge of the fireplace and went down into the cellar where there was a large barrel full of cider.

He pulled out the stopper from the mouth of the barrel and held out his mug. It made a popping sound and the cider spurted out into his mug, full of foam and sparkle which pleased him very much.

Suddenly, over the gurgle of the apple cider he could hear some noises coming from the kitchen above his head. What was that? he thought with a start: could it be Spitz the dog after the meat? The very thought of it sent him flying up the stairs to the kitchen. As he was about to enter the kitchen he saw the dog leaping out of

the kitchen and out into the yard with the meat in his mouth. "Stop, stop," he shouted, "you thieving dog! Stop!"

But Spitz didn't stop. He knew a good thing when he had it and he fled faster and faster until Fritzl could chase him no more. He panted and puffed as he made his way back, "What's done is done and there's nothing that can be done about it now." With this simple philosophy to soothe his feelings, he mopped his face with his handkerchief and stepped into the house.

With a shock he realized that he had forgotten all about the apple cider. Did I close the

barrel?—he asked himself, and realized that he had not. He slapped his forehead and dashed down into the cellar. He could hardly go in because the barrel was emptying out into the cellar. The apple cider had filled up the room. It was too late and there was nothing that Fritzl could do about it.

"What's gone is gone," said he to himself, "and we can't get it back." Repeating this, he turned his mind to the next household chore that had to be done.

Yes, it was time to churn the butter. Fritzl filled the churn with rich cream and placed it





under the big tree in the yard. It was very pleasant out in the yard under the tree as he churned the butter. Little Kindli played among the daisies in the field and the blue sky above was lit with a golden sun.

As he looked around him, he realized that he had forgotten all about the cow! The poor cow had not had a drop of water all morning and must be dry in the mouth.

So Fritzl ran to the barn carrying a bucket of cool fresh water for the cow. The poor creature's tongue was hanging out with thirst. She was hungry too. So, Fritzl thought he should

take her out to the grassy meadow. But he had the little girl Kindli to care for also. He cannot go far with the cow. He hit upon a smart idea. The roof of their house was built against the hillside and one could walk on top of the roof from the hillside. The roof was covered with cool moss and sod and a fine crop of grass too. He led the cow up to the top for her to feed while he went back to his butter churning.

But hardly had he done this when he found his baby climbing up on the churn. The churn tipped over and all the butter lay on the ground with baby Kindli in the middle, nicely coated with creamy yellow. Fritzl came running and picked her up and laid her in the sun to dry.

It was already noon and Liesi would soon be coming home for lunch and the soup was not ready. Fritzl dashed off to the garden to gather onion, potato, carrot, beans and cabbage, turnip and parsley and celery. All of this would make a fine soup, he was sure, and with his arms full he set to work in the kitchen. As he peeled and pared the vegetables, the skins falling all over the kitchen, he heard great

noises on the rooftop and feared that the cow might slip off the rooftop and fall. So, he carried a string of rope up and tied it round the waist of the cow. He sent the other end of the rope through the chimney into the kitchen below. Then, back in the kitchen, he tied the end around his own waist.

He continued his work. He thought, "This will keep the cow from falling off the roof or running away."

He was all set to cook the soup when, with a big bump, the cow rolled over and fell off the roof. Immediately, as you can guess, he was whisked up towards the chimney passage. There dangled poor Fritzl, unable to go up or get down.

Soon Liesi came home. Imagine her shock when the first thing she should see was their cow hanging over the edge of the roof! "What was the cow doing there?" she wondered. It looked like it was half-choked too, with her eyes popping. Liesi lost no time. With her scythe she cut the rope. Thank heaven, the cow was alive and none the worse for the experience.

The garden gate was open



and all the pigs, goats and geese had entered it and completely ate up everything that was in the garden. Remember when Fritzl gathered some vegetables to cook the soup with? Well, his arms were so full that he forgot to shut the garden gate and now the garden was bare.

As she proceeded, Liesi saw that the churn in the yard had been tipped over with little Kindli sitting in the sun, stiff and sticky with the butter and cream and Spitz the dog was sick on the grass for having eaten all that meat. As she entered the house, she could get

the strong smell of apple cider. Her surprise was gone when she made way to the cellar and saw what had happened.

As she entered the kitchen she heard sounds of gurgles and arms and legs kicking from the cooking pot and found her husband inside.

When she cut the rope near the roof's edge to save the cow, the dangling Fritzl fell into the soup pot. It was the largest pot, for Fritzl had wanted to cook even for the night the most excellent soup ever cooked!

Quickly, Liesi saved her husband from the soup and pulled him out with tomato juice in his eyes, a cabbage leaf in his hair, celery in his pocket and a sprig of parsley over one ear. He was a sight.

But Liesi did not laugh. "What on earth happened?" she asked.

Fritzl told her everything and declared that he would never change his job again. Even though Liesi said encouragingly that perhaps he would like to try it again another day, he vehemently refused, saying, "Leave me to my fields and you can care for the home. I will never again say that my work is harder than yours, my dear Liesi. For now I know."

He was so sorry about everything that Liesi did not mind the mess and said, "Well, if that's how you feel, we can each do our bit of work and live happily!"

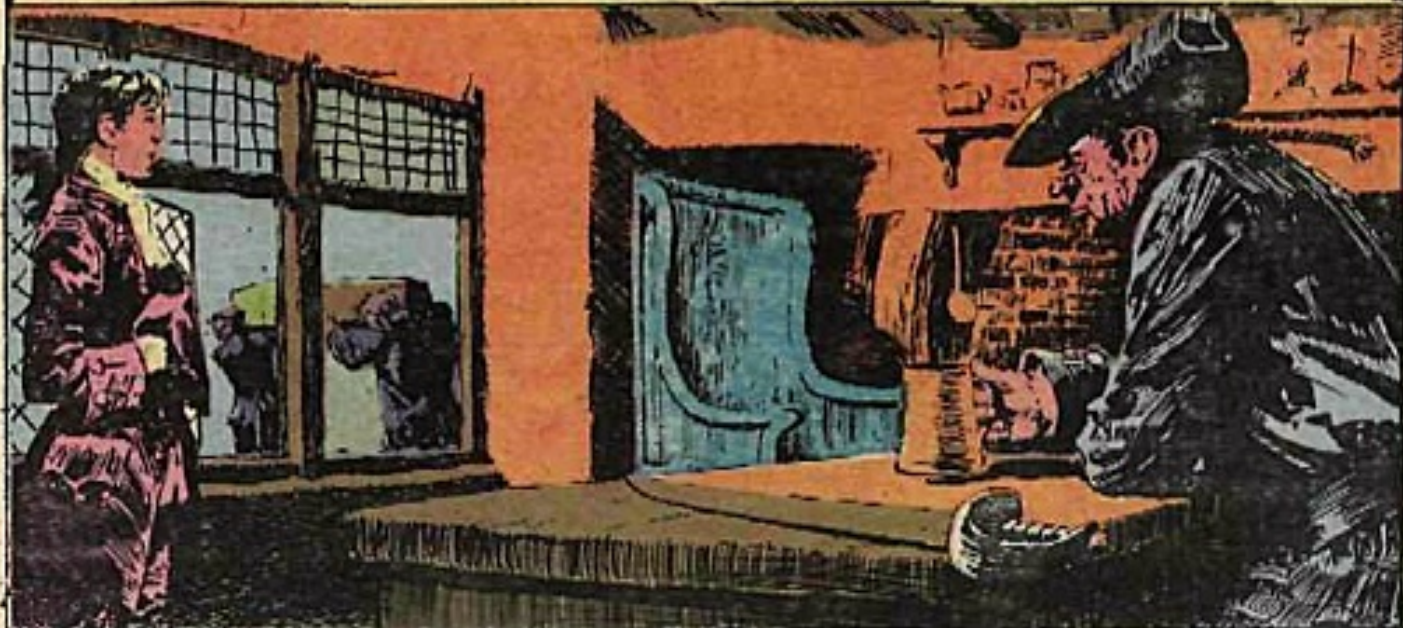
And that is what they did.

—Retold by Lalitha Manuel.



Treasure Island

Jim Hawkins tells the story of the old sea captain who has come to his father's inn, the 'Admiral Benbow,' and how, while he is there, he has received a visit from a man named Black Dog which has led to a cutlass fight, ending with the flight of Black Dog. Now the captain has received another visitor, a sinister looking blind man.



"What is the black spot?" I asked. "That's a summons," said the captain, falling back on his pillows. My father died that night, which put all matters to one side, so that I had no time to think much of the captain. By the time the funeral hearse arrived, he was up and about. He now carried his cutlass with him everywhere.



The day after the funeral, on a bitter frosty afternoon, I was standing at the door full of sad thoughts of my father, when I saw someone drawing slowly along the road. He was plainly blind, for he tapped before him with a stick. He stopped in front of the inn and addressed the air in front of him, "Will any kind friend inform me where I am?" "You are at the inn called 'Admiral Benbow,'" said I. "Ah," said the blind man. "Then I'll be at the right place to see the captain."

"Will you give me your hand, my kind friend, and lead me in?" said the blind man. I held out my hand, and the horrible soft-spoken eyeless creature gripped it for a moment like a vice. "Now, boy," he said, "take me in to the captain. Take me in straight, or I'll break your arm." And as he spoke, he gave it a wrench that made me cry out aloud.



"Come now, march," he said. I never heard a voice so cruel and cold and ugly as that blind man's. It cowed me more than the pain, and I obeyed him at once, walking straight in at the door and into the parlour where the captain sat dazed with rum. "Here's a friend come to see you, Bill," said the blind man to our captain.

The expression on the captain's face was not so much of terror as of mortal sickness. He made a movement to rise, but I do not believe he had enough force left in his body. "Now, Bill, sit where you are," said the blind man. "If I can't see, I can hear a finger stirring. Business is business. Boy, take his left hand by the wrist and bring it near to my right." I obeyed him, and I saw him passing something into the palm of the captain's, which closed upon it instantly.



"And now that's done," said the blind man; and at the words, he suddenly skipped out of the parlour and into the road. I went to the door and watched him hurrying away. As I stood there, motionless, I could hear his stick go tap-tapping into the distance.



I went back to the parlour where I found the captain looking sharply into the palm of his hand. "Ten o'clock," he cried. "Six hours! We'll do them yet!" He sprang to his feet, but even as he did so, he reeled, and then with a peculiar sound, fell forward to the floor.



I ran to him at once, calling my mother. But haste was all in vain. The captain had been struck dead by thundering apoplexy. On the floor beside him close to the dead captain's hand was a round piece of paper, blackened on one side. I could not doubt that this was the black spot he had mentioned. On the other side was a short message.

My mother arrived at my side, and I told her all I knew. Some of the captain's money—if he had any—was certainly due to us, but it was not likely that our captain's shipmates, above all the two specimens seen by me, would be inclined to give up their booty if they returned. "We have till ten," my mother said. Leaving the captain where he lay we went up to his room.



The key fitted in the lock of the captain's chest, and when we opened it, a strong smell of tar and tobacco rose from the interior. Below a suit was a miscellany of things.



In the bottom of the chest we found a bundle tied up in oilskin and a canvas bag that gave forth, at a touch, the jingle of gold. "I'll have my dues, and not a farthing more," said my mother. It was while we were counting out the coins that I heard in the silent frosty air, a sound that brought my heart in my mouth—the tap-tapping of the blind man's stick on the road.



Then there was the sound of someone knocking at the door. Presently, when no one answered, we could hear the handle being turned and the bolt rattling as the wretched being tried to enter. There was a long time of silence and then at last the tapping recommenced as the blind man began to walk away.

I was sure the bolted door must have seemed suspicious and would bring the whole hornet's nest about our ears. "Mother," I said, "let's be going." My mother took up the bag of money belonging to the dead sea captain, and I took up the oilskin packet. A few minutes later we were in full retreat from the inn.

—To continue



REVENGE OF THE DEAD

Once upon a time there was a king who suffered from a dangerous disease. All the physicians in the kingdom could not cure him.

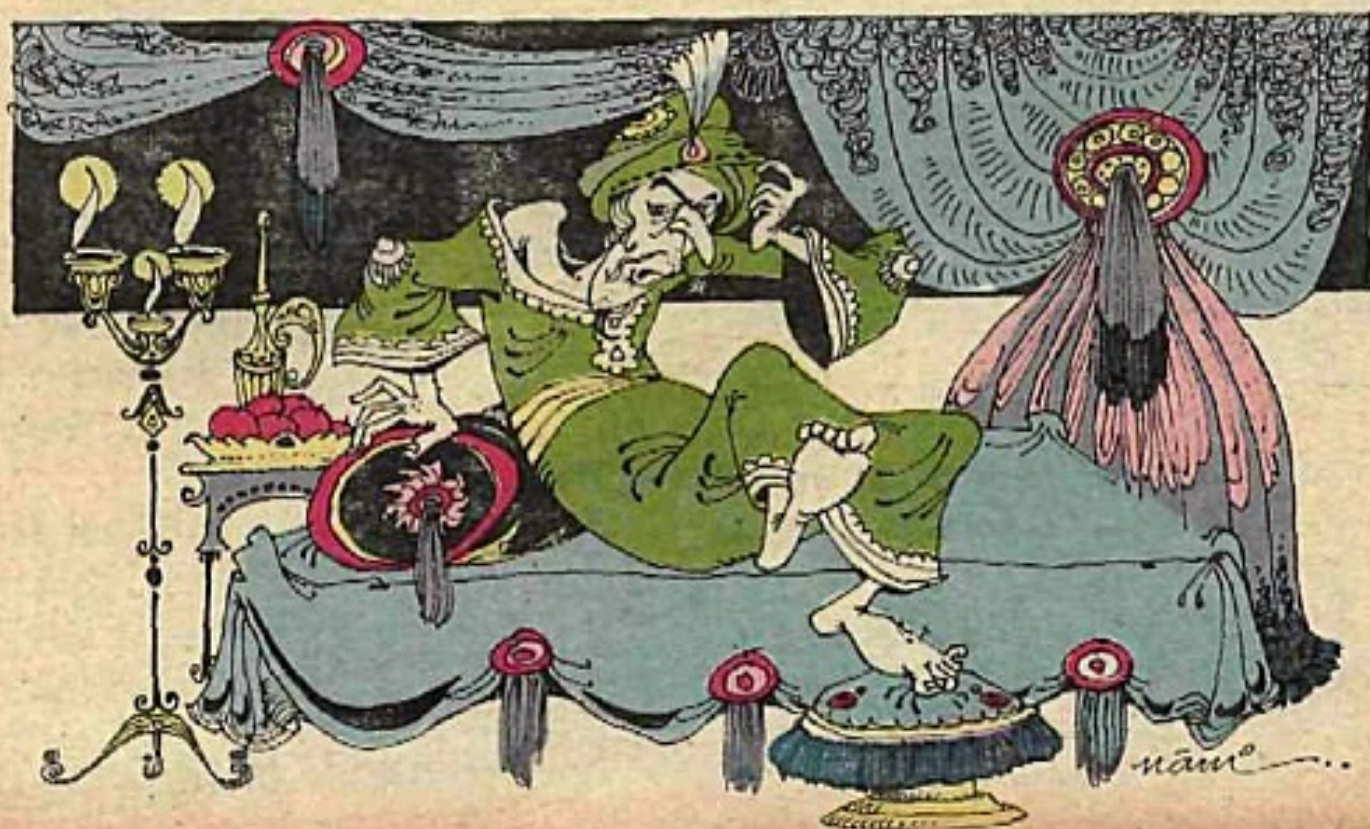
Day and night the king remained sad. At times he prayed to God for his help.

Far away in a small village lived a sage. From travelling merchants he heard about the king's suffering. The sage had learnt the cures for some deadly diseases from his master who

was no more. The master had told him to treat only such men who were good to the best of his knowledge. He was not to use his learning for money.

The sage felt pity for the king. He went to the town and examined the king. After ascertaining the nature of his disease, he said, "I can cure you!"

"Really?" The king could not contain his joy. "I shall make you so rich that your children and grandchildren and their





children and grandchildren won't have any reason to worry for a happy living. Moreover, you'll be my life-long friend."

"Thank you, my lord. Hold this herb in your grip and walk in the sun till you sweat. Then take a bath and have your food and go to sleep. We will see how you feel tomorrow," said the physician.

The king held the herb in his grip and walked around the palace. The sage asked him to stop when he sweated. Then the king had his bath and food and then he went to bed.

He woke up next morning fresh as a healthy youngster! To

his great surprise, he saw no symptom of the disease that troubled him for years.

In time he appeared in the court. The sage was already there. The king rushed to him and embraced him. He made the sage sit by his side. He was so overwhelmed with gratefulness that for some time he could not even speak. Then he addressed his ministers and courtiers and said, "This sage did what a hundred famous physicians had failed to do. He cured me of the curse of a disease. Gentlemen, with how much money should I reward him?"

"Five thousand!" "Ten thousand!" "Twenty thousand!" shouted the different courtiers.

"I'll give him anything he desires!" announced the king.

"That's the right thing to do!" agreed the courtiers.

"My friend and saviour! How much money will satisfy you? Ask and the amount is yours!" said the king, looking at the sage.

"Thanks a lot, my lord, but I cannot accept any money. That is the injunction my master has passed on me," humbly said the sage.

Nothing would persuade the

sage to accept any reward. "Then remain here as my best friend and most valued courtier," the king said. The sage stayed on, waiting for a time when he can take leave of the king.

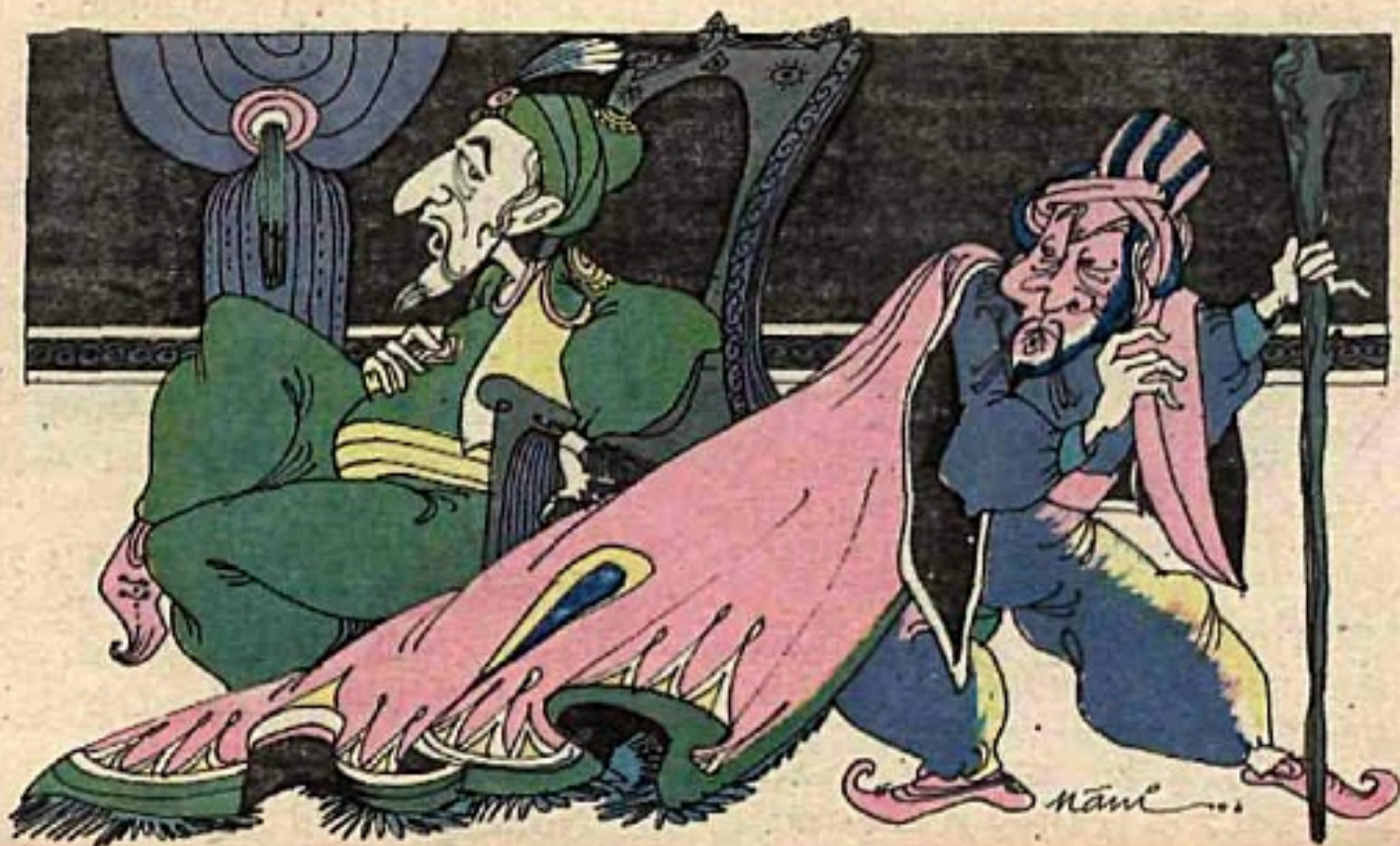
The reception and the respect the sage received was never liked by the king's old minister. Envy consumed him. One day he called on the king privately and said, "I am old. Death would claim me any moment. But I shall fail in my duty if I do not warn you against a great danger that is looming large on you!"

"What is it, my good old

minister?" asked the king, extremely anxious.

By and by the minister disclosed to the king what was in his wretched mind. "The man whom you call a sage is a spy. What has cured you is not medicine but black magic!" was the theme of the minister's warning.

At first the king rejected the minister's suspicions as utter nonsense. But the crafty minister drove home his point with arguments: Why should the sage refuse to accept any money unless he had some other motive? If he could cure you so easily, what guarantee is there that he would not kill you equally





easily?

The last argument did the trick. The king spent a restless night torn between affection and suspicion. When it was morning, he called the wicked minister and asked him, "What should I do?"

"Kill him immediately, my good lord!" advised the fellow.

The king at once summoned the sage and said, "You are to lose your head!"

"Lose my head, my lord? Why? What is my crime?"

"You are a spy. If you could cure me by making me hold a herb, tomorrow you can kill me by making me smell a flower!"

The sage implored the king to be spared of his life. "I am not only an innocent man, but also your benefactor. God will not pardon you if you slay me," he said again and again. But his words fell on deaf ears.

When the sage knew that he had no escape, he said, "I wish I could hand over my book to someone who deserves it."

"What book?" demanded the king.

"As you have found out, I am a magician. My greatest possession is my book of magic!"

"Give it to us!" commanded the king.

"Good. Since I am giving my life to you, why not the book? Read it carefully and make use of the magic formulae written in it. To begin with, you can even make my severed head answer you question!"

"How wonderful!"

"It is so. After I am beheaded, place my head on a seat in front of you. Turn the leaves of the book one by one till you come to a page where something is written in red. Read that aloud and look at my head. Though I would be dead by then, it shall speak!" assured the sage.

The sage then went into his lodge and, after sometime, came out with an old book and handed it over to the king.

The happy king then ordered him to be beheaded. His severed head was placed on a seat before the throne and the king began turning the leaves of the book.

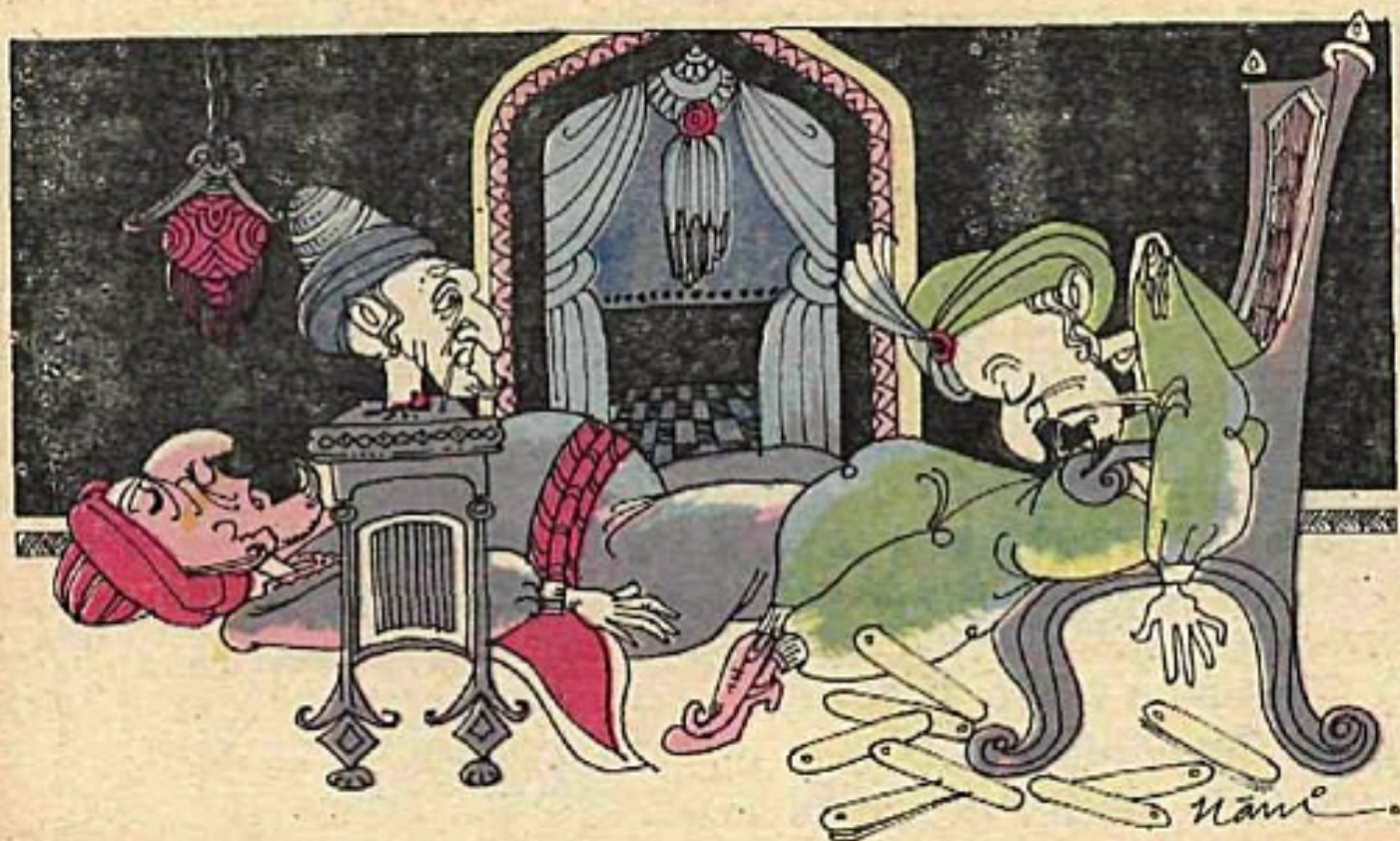
The leaves stuck to one another. The king, as was his habit, moistured his fingers by his tongue again and again to separate the leaves.

Almost in the last page he saw the writing in red. It read: "You ungrateful creature! Follow me to the abode of death!"

The scared king looked at the sage's severed head. It looked like grinning.

The king rolled down from his throne. The poison his victim had spread on the leaves of the book had gone into his system through his poisoned fingers touching his tongue again and again.

He gave a terrifying cry looking at his wicked minister before breathing his last. The guilty old minister did not understand what happened. But the severed head of the sage and the sudden death of the king made him so nervous that his heart-beat stopped.



WHEN FAITH CAN BE BLIND



A sage lived in a small forest at the foot of the Vindhyas. He had a few disciples with him.

One day three young men came to him. One was Shyam, the other Indra, and the third, Raj. All the three desired to become his disciples. The sage asked them to wait for a day or two.

Next day the sage was out for a walk. The three candidates accompanied him.

Suddenly, looking at a pond, The sage said, "What a beautiful red lotus!"

"Indeed, it is so," agreed his three companions.

The sage stopped and looked

at the lotus for a few more seconds. "I see, it is not red but white!"

"It is white," agreed Shyam. "No, it is red," said Indra.

"No, no, Indra, it is White," asserted Raj.

The sage resumed walking and all fell silent.

After the walk, the sage told the three young men, "I shall call you when it is time. In the meanwhile, live truthfully, do your work with sincerity, but pray to God as often as you can. You can go back now."

The young men left. But the very next day the sage asked one of his disciples to summon Shyam.

Shyam came without the slightest delay. He was delighted beyond words at being called by the sage. He was duly initiated.

After some days, he asked the sage, "Sir, when would you summon Indra and Raj?"

"Indra may be summoned after five years. So far as Raj is concerned, I don't know," said

the sage.

Five years passed and Indra was summoned and initiated. Then Indra asked, "Sir, when will Raj be called?"

"I don't know."

"Sir, may I know how you made your choice?" asked Indra.

"You may, now that you are my disciple. Do you remember our walk and our appreciating a lotus?"

"Yes, sir."

"Shyam agreed with me because his faith in me was so blind that he really saw it as white the moment I said that it was white. While you spoke the truth by insisting that it was red,

he too spoke a truth, though a different kind of truth. Because of his absolute trust in me, he had already earned the right to be my disciple. But you too were truthful and a few years of preparation made you eligible for initiation," said the sage.

"Sir, may I remind you of the fact that Raj too had seen the lotus as white just as Shyam had?" said Indra.

"No, he had not. He just wished to please me by conveying his ready agreement with me. He was kind to me, but not truthful in the sense you were truthful nor in the sense Shyam was truthful," explained the sage.



With its own built-in sonar system, the playful but highly intelligent dolphin can truly be called....

A Prince Among Whales

The sun shone down on the people laughing and splashing in the sea. Suddenly a startled cry went up from the spectators. Gliding above the surface of the sea, a sharp black fin was moving towards the swimmers.

In a plume of spray, a dark, gleaming shape rose high out of the water. But there was no need for alarm. The creature which had frightened the holiday-makers was not a shark, but a playful dolphin.

This was Opononi, New Zealand, and the dolphin, called Opo by the locals, returned many times to play and frolic with the bathers. Apparently unafraid, she would hold up her tapering snout to catch a ball or carry children astride her broad back.

Opo was a bottle-nosed dolphin. Her species is often seen in exhibition centres called Dolphinarium, where dolphins perform acrobatic tricks and formation high jumps, sometimes even leaping through flaming hoops. Unlike the common dolphin, the bottle-nosed tends to fish in shallow coastal waters. Both prefer the warm temperate seas of the world.

These are the two most widely known of about 44 species of dolphin distributed through the world's oceans and rivers. Most are dark or

light grey, or brown above with pale underbellies. Dolphins are members of the whale family of mammals. Among their distant relatives are the killer whales, the most fearsome predators of the high seas.

The dolphin can be distinguished from the blunt-nosed porpoise by its narrow beak. A typical dolphin is also slightly larger than the porpoise, growing to a length of about two metres.

The dolphin breathes through the nostrils on top of its head. As the animal leaps out of the water with a powerful flip of its tail fins, it spouts out moist, used air through its dorsal blow-hole. A fresh breath is taken before diving below the water.

One particular high-precision instrument used by the dolphin has now been developed artificially by man for his own use. This is the system of echo-location, or sonar. It works when the dolphin emits a series of sounds of differing pitches, probably from somewhere in the nasal passages. These sound waves cause echoes to bounce back from any object in the dolphin's path. It can then tell not only how far away and in what direction the object is, but can build up a complete picture of his surroundings, as on a radar screen.

Safe Navigation

These echoes are heard through two tiny pinholes, about half a millimetre in diameter, which lie just below the eyes. Using echo-location, a dolphin can locate a fish in the dark, cloudy water and swoop upon it with amazing accuracy. In one experiment, 36 metal poles were lowered into a very murky dolphin pool and then fish were thrown into the water. Although the positions of the poles were often changed, the dolphins soon learned to streak towards the fish without once hitting the obstacles.

The dolphin's widely curving mouth gives it a permanent grin. With its huge "smile" and lively eye—quite unlike the glassy eye of a fish—it looks a humorous and friendly creature.

Perhaps the dolphin should share with the dog the title of "man's best friend." Sailors



have believed for many centuries that dolphins save them from ship wrecks and protect them from sharks. Legends from many parts of the world tell of this graceful animal's special relationship with man. One of the oldest was written down by Greek historian Plutarch:

A man called Korianos saw some fishermen about to kill a dolphin they had caught in their net. Korianos begged them to spare the poor creature's life. They agreed, on condition he paid them for it. Korianos released the dolphin into the sea.

Years later, Korianos was shipwrecked off

the island of Mykonos. All those aboard the ship were drowned, except Korianos. A dolphin appeared out of the raging sea and bore him off to safety.

When Korianos died of old age, his funeral pyre was lit down by the seashore. A school of dolphins appeared in the harbour, as if to pay their last respects to a friend.

The most famous friendly dolphin of this century was known as Pelorus Jack. First sighted in 1899, for 15 years he piloted ships through the hazardous Cook Strait between New Zealand's North and South Islands.

The dolphin's remarkable ability and capacity for friendship put him high in the order of intelligent animals, perhaps next to man himself. Dolphins can apparently imitate the human voice. One dolphin is recently reported to have learned to call out people's names, to ask for "more fish" and say the numbers one to ten.

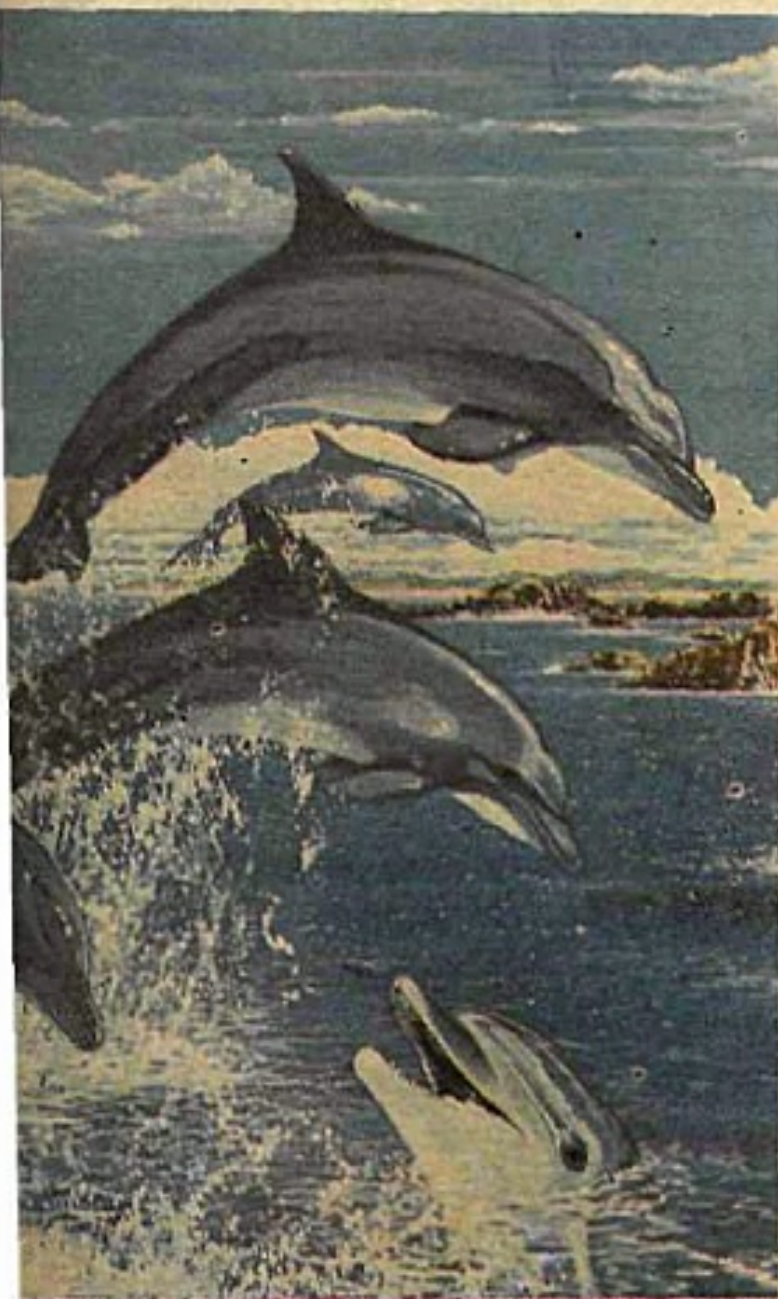
One attribute particularly endearing to man is the mother dolphin's behaviour with her young. The dolphin's method of reproduction is similar to man's in most respects. After a pregnancy lasting about a year, a single baby is born, a replica of the mother, but about one-third of her size.

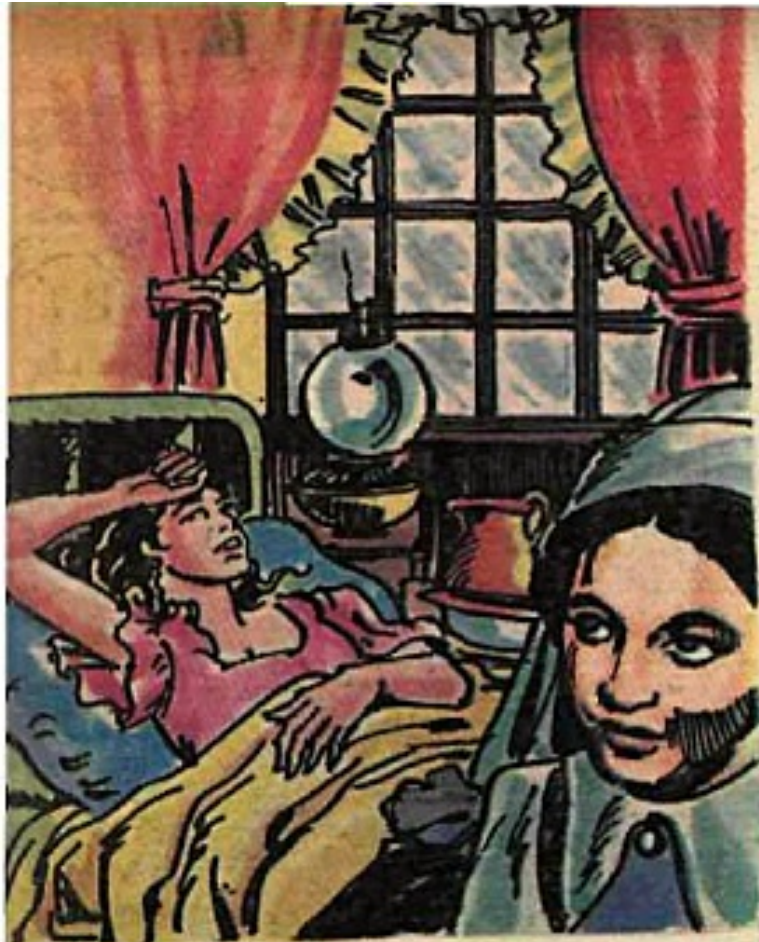
Unlike man, however, the young dolphin is born underwater, and the mother's first concern is to ensure that her infant gets to the surface in order to breathe. If the baby dolphin does not swim up as soon as the umbilical cord is broken, she nudges it upwards with her snout.

The baby suckles its mother's milk for about a year and a half. During this time it is assiduously protected by its mother and other females of the school. They will surround it and drive away its most common enemy, the shark.

In 1978, there was an international outcry when fishermen on the Japanese island of Iki slaughtered a thousand dolphins which were depleting their fish stocks. This year, fishery officials plan to use recorded sounds of killer whales, greatly feared by the dolphins, to scare them away.

In this way the dolphins' lives may be saved. As it did that of Korianos in ancient times, the sight of a suffering dolphin still arouses the pity of man.





Unsolved Mysteries

CURSED WITH A POWER

Bertha was a nice girl like many nice girls in the town. She was about twenty. Her father, Mr. Strydom, was a Dutch missionary who was camping at Cape Town, South Africa.

But many nice girls fall sick and there was nothing surprising in Bertha falling sick.

The surprises began one autumn evening in the year 1920 in the nursing home cabin where she lay quietly. Her nurse had just come in to light a lamp and was leaving, thinking that she was asleep.

"Hello sister, won't you take care of yourself? You're sick!"

the nurse heard Bertha saying softly.

"Bertha, dear, thank you for your concern, but I'm all right. I'm here to take care of you!" replied the nurse affectionately.

"No, sister, you're not all right. Unless you begin treatment right now, you shall die—in three days!"

The nurse looked askance at the patient and then went out. "Mrs. Strydom," she whispered to Bertha's mother at night. "I'm afraid, poor Bertha is having some kind of delirium. I hope, it is only temporary."

"Is it usual for meningitis patients to become delirious?" asked a worried Mrs. Strydom.

"Not quite. And Bertha is not running high temperature either! Maybe, she was pulling my legs," said the nurse with a smile.

Mrs. Strydom was not impressed by the nurse's explanation. Bertha was not the kind of girl to make jokes at a new acquaintance.

But Mrs. Strydom forgot all about it when she saw Bertha fully recovered the next morning. Bertha smiled and so did her mother. Two days later she was discharged from the nursing home. She took leave of her doctors and wanted to see the nurse.

"She is suffering from fever—and is in that cabin there!" an attendant pointed out. Bertha peeped into the cabin.

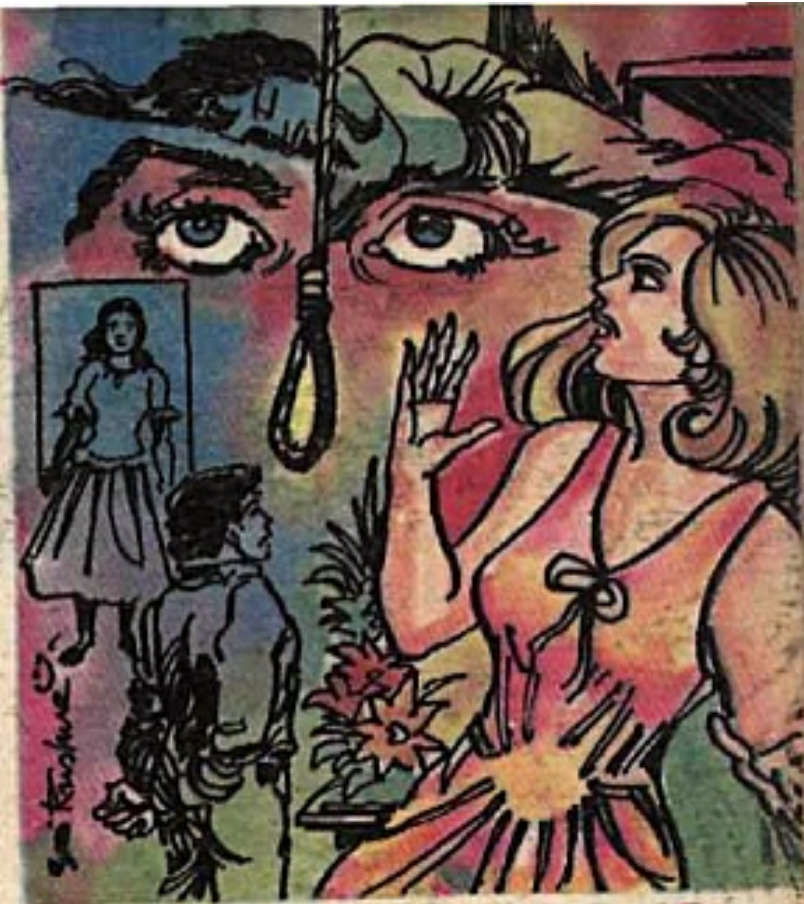
The nurse smiled. "Bertha dear, how prophetic you were! I fell sick. But, I hope, I'm not going to die!"

Bertha's face grew solemn. She thanked the nurse for her kindness and left her cabin in a hurry. Outside, she whispered to her mother, "She is going to die—tomorrow."

"Don't speak nonsense, child! She doesn't look like one to die in a few hours!" Mrs. Strydom took her daughter to task.

Bertha kept quiet until she reached home. But as soon as the door was opened by their newly appointed maid-servant whom Bertha had not seen before, she gave out a suppressed shriek.

"What's the matter with you, Bertha? Feeling giddy?" Mr.



Strydom who had followed the maid asked Bertha, lending her his support.

Bertha nodded to agree with her father. But after the gentleman left for the church, she told her mother in confidence why she shrieked: "The moment my eyes fell on our new maid, I saw behind her a dark lane in which she was lying killed. A darkish man was climbing the gallows!"

Mrs. Strydom began to worry. Has her daughter become mentally sick?

By next morning her suspicion changed into awe and surprise—when news reached that the nurse had died.

Bertha wept. She did not know why she had prophesied the nurse's death. All she knew was, she could not have helped it! She saw it!

Others came to know of this strange gift Bertha had got from her meningitis! "My son is in the sea. Do you see any danger to him?" someone asked.

"The danger has passed over him already—claiming his life!" was Bertha's instant reaction. Soon it was found to be true.

Bertha felt disgusted with her power of prophecy—a power limited to the prophecy of death. She was an unhappy woman. But she had no escape. More and more people came to

her to know what fate had in store for them. She was growing famous.

About the maid-servant: six years after Bertha's ominous vision, the maid-servant was found lying murdered in a lane. One man named Munnik was arrested, was found guilty, and was hanged.

"It is terrible—terrible—to look at friends and see their death!" Bertha complained again and again, withdrawing herself into seclusion. "I cannot go on. It is impossible," one day she wrote in her diary.

Next day she was found dead in her bed.





*New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire*

Things Unsaid

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of thunderclaps could be heard moaning of jackals and eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, you must be having some purpose in pursuing in this mission. But there are people who are never satisfied with what they achieve. Let me narrate to you an incident to illustrate my point. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: King Chandrapal ruled over the kingdom of Kamboj. He was known



for his interest in literature. Poets and authors received great encouragement from him.

Shravan was a young man who aspired to become known as a poet. There was nobody in the village where he lived who would appreciate his poetry. So he presented himself before the king.

"My lord, I wish to pursue writing poetry. But how can I sustain myself?" he said.

"Can you read out some of your poems to me?" asked the king.

"With pleasure, my lord." Shravan recited a couple of his best poems. The king looked

satisfied and gave him appointment as one of the court poets.

Shravan was overwhelmed with the king's love for poetry.

Every evening the king listened to recitation by poets who came from different parts of the kingdom. The king was always appreciative of their works and he rewarded them with prizes or titles.

In a few days Shravan began to feel quite uneasy with the poetry sessions. It was because he found most of the poems appreciated by the king to be immature and defective. Some of them were not even worth being called poetry.

At first he thought that the king was patronising the poets because they were poor. But soon he found out that excepting one or two the others were well-to-do people. They did not require any patronage.

Of course the king never failed to praise Shravan whenever he read out a new poem to him. But Shravan did not feel encouraged, because he knew that the king bestowed similar words of praise on even worthless poets!

Six months passed. One day a celebrated poet named Shank-

arananda visited the court as the king's guest. Poet Shankarananda had been given enthusiastic receptions and rewards in the courts of many a king. The court of Kamboj did not lag behind any other court in honouring him.

Shravan made an appointment with the famous poet and met him in private. "Sir, I hold the post of a court-poet. I am paid a thousand rupees a month. Will you kindly read a few of my poems and give me your opinion on them?"

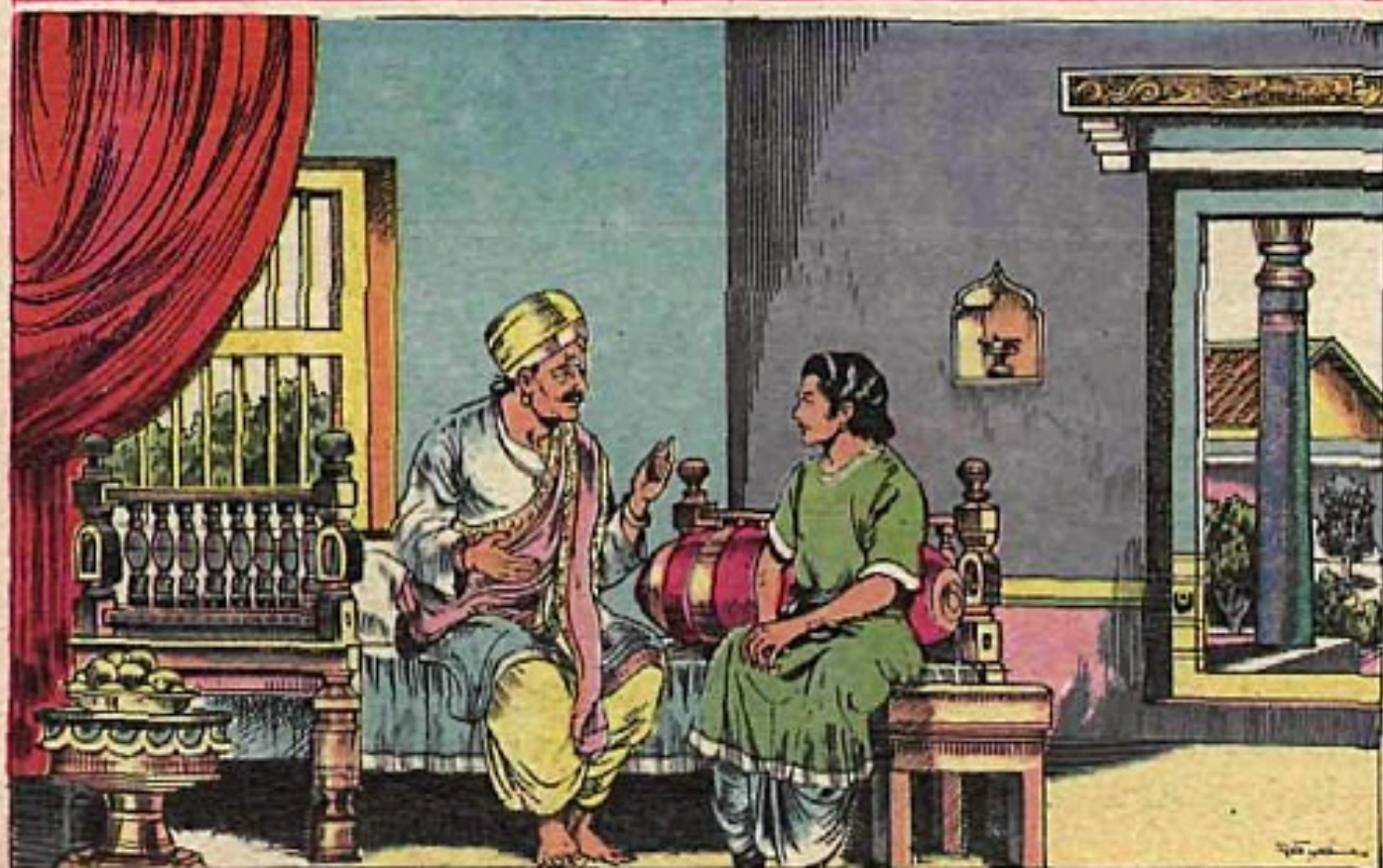
Shankarananda read his poems with great attention. He then said in a tender tone, "My

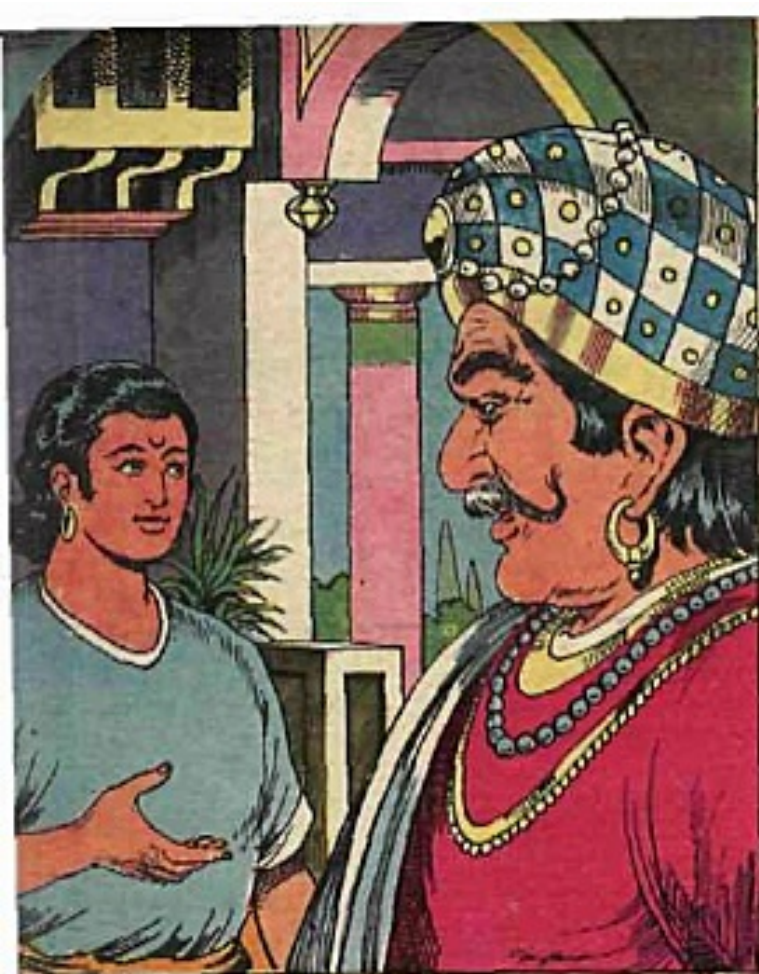
son, the king is a kind-hearted man; you are lucky; your future seems bright."

Shravan was happy. But, after a moment's reflection on the great poet's statement, he looked grave. "Sir, you opened my eyes. Thank you very much," he said while taking leave of Shankarananda.

Shravan straightway went to the king's chief minister and said, "Sir, I must proceed to Varanasi for studies in prosody. I may be relieved of my post."

The minister nodded and said, "But it will be ungrateful of you to go away without meeting the king. Ingratitude is a





sin."

"You're right, sir. I must take leave of His Highness. I shall never be ungrateful," assured Shravan. Then, while turning to go, he stopped and said, "Sir, I am most grateful to you!" The minister smiled. Shravan left for Varanasi after meeting the king.

The vampire paused for a minute and then demanded of King Vikram in a stern voice: "O King, what was the significance of Poet Shankarananda's statement that at first it made Shravan happy, but then it made him grave? Why did he decide to leave a comfortable job? It was natural for Shravan

to feel grateful to the king. But why did he suddenly feel it necessary to express his gratefulness to the minister? Answer me, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

Forthwith answered King Vikram, "Shravan, at first, had not understood the inner meaning of Shankarananda's statement. He grew grave when he understood it. Shravan had told Shankarananda that he was a poet and he received a handsome salary from the king. Then he asked the great poet to read his poetry. In such a situation it would have been natural for the great poet to say that indeed the king was a true lover of poetry. Instead, he said that the king was a good man. That meant that the king gave Shravan a good salary not because of Shravan's talent but because he was kind! Then Shankarananda observed that Shravan's future should be bright. In other words, Shravan's poetry at the present did not deserve any praise.

"Shravan was intelligent. He understood that if he has to make his future bright, he must



go to a place where there were experts to guide him. He knew the calibre of the poets in Kamboj. Among them there was none better than he.

"The reason for his feeling grateful to the minister is quite subtle. Shravan had found out that the king did not understand poetry very much. He just kept praising all. The minister did not wish Shravan to criticise the king before scholars and poets at Varanasi. After all the king

had been kind to him. By reminding Shravan that ingratitude was a sin, the wise minister hinted at this. Shravan got the hint. That is why he expressed his gratitude to the minister. Shravan was intelligent. He could understand things unsaid by both Shankarananda and the minister."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

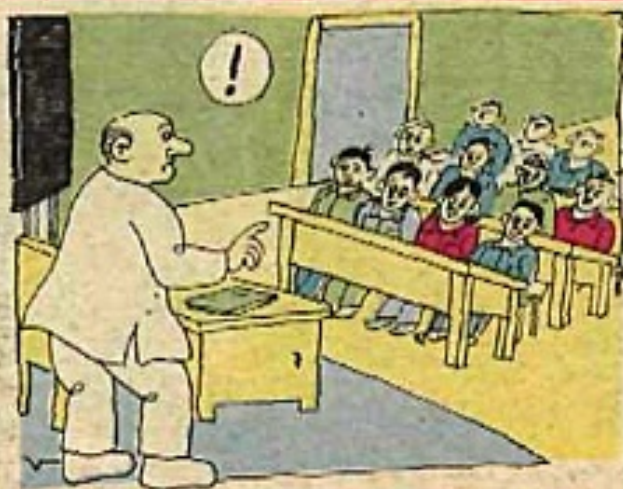
A Matter of Curiosity

"There are a full dozen cinema theatres in our town. Right?" the teacher paused for an answer.

"Right, sir," the class replied in a chorus.

"You'd be surprised to learn that I have not visited one of them," asserted the teacher.

"Which one, sir?" asked a curious voice.



LAUGH WITH NASRUDDIN
WHOM SHOULD YOU BELIEVE

Once a young man met Mulla Nasruddin.
"Can I borrow your donkey?" he asked.



"I'm sorry. The donkey is away," said the Mulla. The young man turned to go. But he had to stop.

Because just then he heard the Mulla's donkey braying. "Didn't you say that the donkey was away?" he asked.



"I did," asserted the Mulla. "Young man, should you believe a donkey more than a man? The world will laugh at you!"



The House of Miracles

Prashant decided to settle down in the prosperous village nestling amidst greenery far in the frontier of his state. It was his intention to start some business there and then to shift his family from his original place.

With the help of Ravi, his wife's younger brother, Prashant set up a house a little away from the village. The house and the lands around it were excellent, but he spent all his money on them. There was nothing left with which to start any business.

But he had come to realise a very important thing: the people of the village were simpletons. At the same time, they were proud and very conscious of their prestige. They were eager to show to the outsiders that they were very clever.

Prashant thought out a plan. He walked the village street holding an earthen apple that looked like a true apple.

"How did you come across an apple at this season?" asked Govind, a villager.

"Why, the mango tree at the back of my house is teeming with apples!" replied Prashant calmly.

"What! Apples in a mango tree! Can that ever happen?"

"It cannot happen ordinarily. But there are always exceptional situations. The miracle is possible through the blessings of a sage," explained Prashant and he resumed walking.

Govind stood stunned for a second. Then he shouted, "Wait a minute, Prashant, just a minute. Did the sage perform any other miracle?"

"I'm in a hurry." Prashant went away.

Hardly a minute had passed when Govind saw Madho Singh. "Govind, will you give me company? I am going to show you something strange in the compound of that newcomer, Prashant."

"You mean apples in a mango tree?"

"Oh, no. A cobra has taken residence behind his house. If you bow to it, it will talk to you."

"That is really fantastic. His compound has become a magical place, I must say," commented Govind.

They were soon met by Suresh on the village square. "Have you heard of the fabulous tree in Prashant's courtyard? It keeps lying down during the day, but stands up at night and guards its owner's house. That is not all. If you pluck its leaves, it weeps aloud. If you pat it, it laughs aloud!"

They had gone a few yards when Sudhir saw them. "Where are you going, friends?" he asked.

"To Prashant's house."

"Good. I too am going there. Just now he told me of his magic broom-stick which goes on sweeping the house all by it-



self."

Before long there were ten of them. Each had been informed of a strange happening at Prashant's house. The reporter was none other than Prashant himself.

"It is worth paying a visit and having a first-hand knowledge of the phenomena," they agreed among themselves.

They entered Prashant's compound all agog with expectations. They tapped on the door. Ravi opened it. "Can I do anything for you, gentlemen?" he asked.

"Well, young man, we are here to have only glimpses of

the apple-bearing mango tree, the talking cobra, the tree that sleeps at day and guards your house at night, and the broomstick that sweeps without any human aid."

"What do you say, gentlemen! I have never heard of such miracles taking place anywhere, what to speak of our house!" replied Ravi.

The villagers looked at one another meaningfully. "Why do you refuse us the privilege, young man? For your information, Prashant himself has confided to us of these things," they said politely.

Ravi made a gesture of help-





lessness and said, "Very well, you can take a walk around the house and also see inside it if you can find any such object!"

With great enthusiasm the villagers began their investigation. However, it did not take them long to realise that none of the miracles took place.

They left the place, quite frustrated. Soon they saw Prashant.

"Prashant! Were your reports true?" they demanded.

"How can they be true, gentleman? Am I not working at the king's instruction?"

"What do you mean?" the villagers showed their surprise.

"To tell you confidentially, the king proposes to impose a new tax on the simpletons and fools. I am asked to find out how many such people are there in this village," said Prashant, lowering his voice. "The fools have to pay double of what the simpletons would be required to pay," he added.

Is that so? How are you going to prepare the list?"

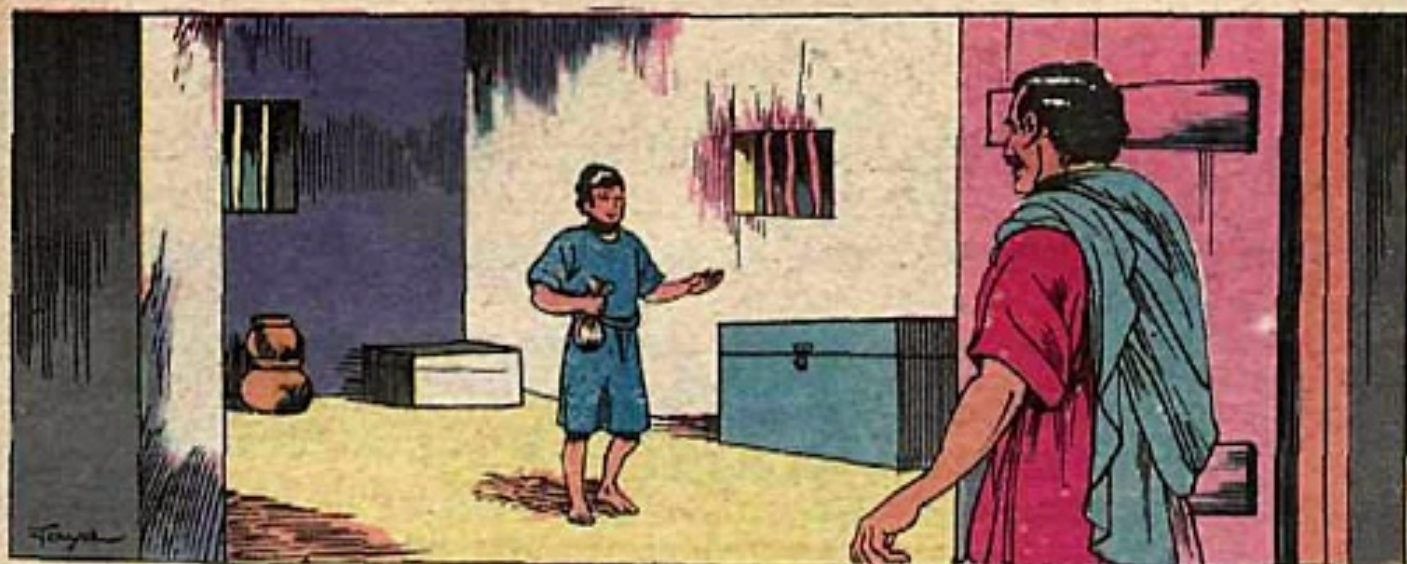
"I have given bluffs to all the villagers. Those who go up to my door but return after Ravi denies our having anything miraculous are simpletons. Those who look for the miracles even after his denial are fools!"

The group of ten people stood speechless for a moment. Then one of them asked him, "Prashant, are you going home?"

"No, I am on my way to the bazar," replied Prashant and he went away.

The ten went back to Ravi. "Look here, young man, please do not tell Prashant that we had visited your place." They handed over some money to him.

"How can I do that, gentleman? Does one keep anything hidden from one's bother-in-law?" Ravi showed his unwill-



ingness to oblige them.

"Young man, you must be kind to us." The group gave him some more money.

Later during the day some more people did the same. Ravi

collected a good amount of money.

"We have now enough to embark on a business," he announced happily when Prashant was back at night.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



The Tantrik Speaks The Truth!

Vanacharya of Chitrapur claimed that he was not only an astrologer, but also a tantrik.

Many people accepted his claim as true—even the king. In fact, the king trusted him too much. When a case would come before him for trial, he would secretly ask Vanacharya, "Can you tell me which party is at fault?" The party pointed out by Vanacharya was punished.

Vanacharya himself did not keep this a secret. As a result people began to bribe him so that his opinion will go in their favour. He earned a lot.

The king was reported of his dishonesty. He called Vanacharya and said, "One of our courtiers complains against a gentleman saying that the gentleman is corrupt. Can you tell me whether the courtier is speaking a truth or a lie? He should be punished if he is lying."

"I shall perform a tantrik rite tonight and report to you tomorrow morning," said Vanacharya.

At night a courtier met him. "Punditji, I am the courtier who has complained to the king against somebody. If your report says that I have lied, I am finished!" He then paid Vanacharya a thousand rupees. Vanacharya accepted it with a smile.

In the morning Vanacharya told the king, "The courtier has spoken the truth."

"Is that so?" exclaimed the king. Then, he ordered his guards to arrest Vanacharya and throw him into gaol.

"How am I at fault, my lord?" asked a surprised Vanacharya.

"You are the gentleman against whom the courtier had brought the charge of corruption," answered the king.



The Stolen Trophy

Sidhanta stopped at the entrance to King Parakrama's private chamber and took a long look inside. The kind king seemed agitated, and his hands were locked at the back, a sure sign that something serious had upset the mighty ruler of Mallipuram.

What could that be?—the wise old minister wondered. He stepped into the beautifully decorated chamber where the king normally received important visitors. But, the person who stood before His Majesty was a

mere boy, in his early teens, and from the way he stood, his head bowed, the silver-bearded wise man, Sidhanta, knew that the boy had come to the fountain of justice with some complaint.

"Come, my dear minister, it is time for you to take over!" the king said in a low voice, revealing anxiety, and anger.

Sidhanta bowed to his King, and gazed at the boy, who looked at him with large eyes filled with sorrow and appeal.

"Your Majesty, what ails our young guest?"





"Sidhanta, do you recognise this boy? His name... oh, why should I reveal anything? You are supposed to be the smartest man in my kingdom! Tell me what you can find out about him."

"My Lord," Sidhanta smiled briefly, "this boy is the winner of Your Majesty's Annual Knowledge Award... yes, I remember his name too... Subuddhi! Am I right? His eyes filled with tears tell me that something remorseful has happened to him. I hope he has not lost the trophy!"

The boy, Subuddhi, now burst into tears and sobbed

loudly. The King walked upto him and patted him on the back, consoling him.

"Sidhanta, you have guessed correct. The gold trophy has been stolen from him—something that ought not to happen in my kingdom. But it has happened."

"Yes, sir," Subuddhi spoke amidst sobs, "The gold trophy our noble king awarded me is missing, stolen from my room at the Students' Hostel."

"Subuddhi, tell me all about it. Do not leave any detail. Nothing is small or trivial in this world; every thing serves a purpose. Now, I am all ears..." Sidhanta said.

The boy began. King Parakrama had established an academy known as 'Gnana Vidyalaya' in Mallipuram, imparting special courses in our ancient epics, scriptures, literature, etc. Those selected for taking up the courses were given free food and shelter by the palace. They were lodged in a lovely building on the banks of the charming lake Kedari, at some distance from the city of Mallipuram. Subuddhi was a brilliant student, and lately he had won the Knowledge Award

given by the king every year to the most intelligent boy. The award was a stack of gold leaves looking like manuscripts held by a pair of solid gold-made hands. The prize won by the hard-working boy had been missing from his room at the lakeside hostel!

"Sidhanta, now you know what has happened. I give you the responsibility of recovering the gold trophy and finding out the culprit. Theft in Mallipuram? It is disgusting!"

Sidhanta smiled. The boy too smiled for the first time in several hours. The king laughed and waved at his minister who never failed to find answers to puzzles!

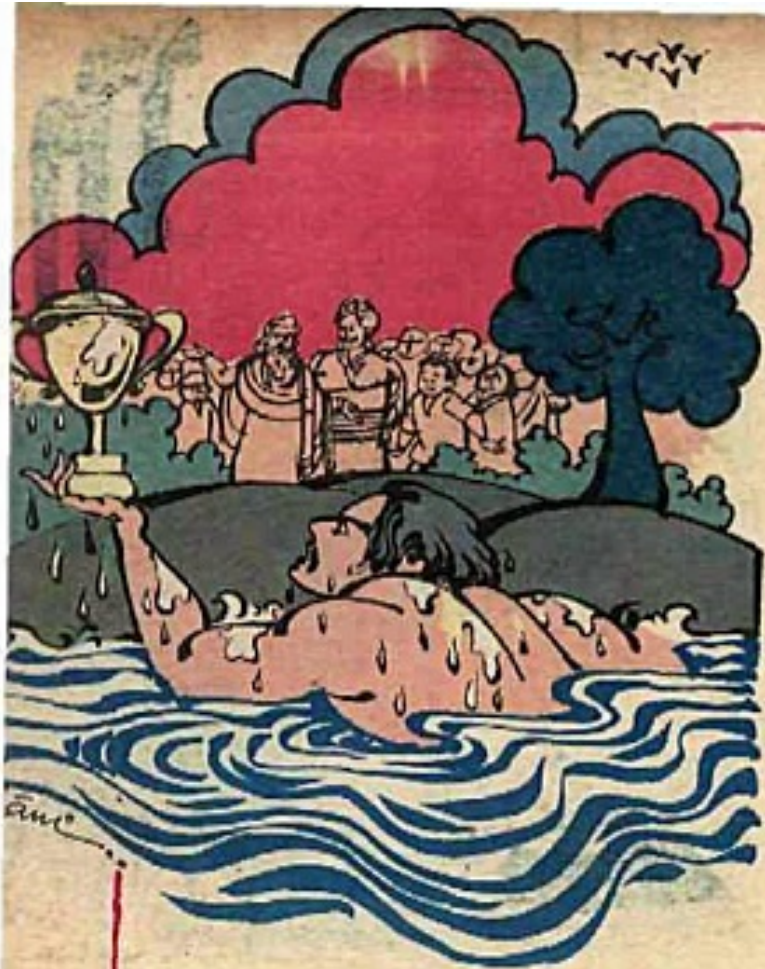
* * *

Sidhanta stood inside the boy's room in the lakeside hostel. It was spacious and tastefully decorated. Cool winds from the lake blew softly through the large window in the southern wall of the room. The room had very little furniture—a mat woven with a kind of grass, a pillow, an earthen jug and copper tumbler and stacks of palm-leaf books arranged neatly in one corner of the room and a wooden chest. The minister had been left alone in the room.



Letting his eyes roam freely round the room, he walked to the window. It had no bars like all other windows in the kingdom of honesty. And yet, somebody did steal the coveted gold trophy. Coveted, yes, someone other than the winner had certainly coveted it! Somebody, most likely another student who desired it but did not get it. Some student stung with pangs of envy! Envy, it could drive human beings to the bottom of degradation. It could burn hearts, and ignite evil emotions and feelings.

Sidhanta pulled at his long beard. Holding the ledge of the



window and standing on his toes, he peeped out through the window. The Kedari lake was within a stone's throw of the wall! Suddenly his face brightened up. As if the mango-shaped lake whispered a secret to him! His hands pulled hard at his long silvery beard, a sure sign of feverish activity inside his grey cells!

Sidhanta paced the room slowly, the wall containing the solitary window attracting his closer attention. His gaze went over to something near the ledge on the bottom of the wall. Dirty, dried, and brown! Quickly he moved closer to the spot

and took lingering looks. He touched the spot, and bits of caked dirt fell into his waiting left palm. He leaned back, and slipped the dirt into a small pouch he had in his dress.

Sidhanta was now smiling. He gave the spot on the wall one more glance, and went out of the room, his face now bathed in smiles.

* * *

Crowds stood on the banks of the Kedari lake watching while policemen swum all over dragging nets through the waters.

Sidhanta, King Parakrama, Subuddhi, the academy authorities and palace officials were near the water-front paying keen attention to the operations going on in the lake.

A guard in the lake called out the king's name and held aloft something he had found in the waters. The solid gold trophy! King Parakrama and others cheered lustily, and tears of joy streamed down the boy's cheeks.

"Sidhanta, I am glad that you have found the gold trophy, but I am not fully satisfied, you must find the thief. We could have given the boy another tro-

phy. But what of the thief? Catch him and then I shall congratulate you."

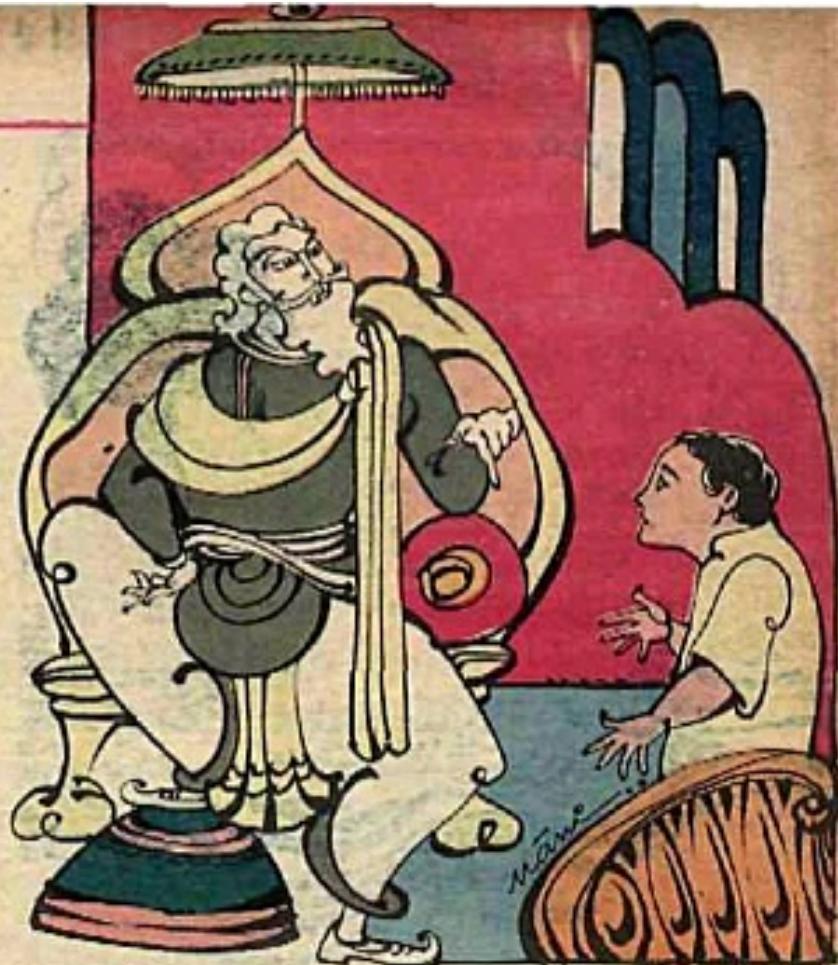
King Parakrama remarked as Subuddhi gazed at the trophy once again in his hands.

"I shall show you the culprit today. Pray, wait a little." Sidhanta smiled, and King Parakrama stared, rather intrigued.

Later they assembled in the main hall of the school. All the students had been summoned. The king sat on a high cushioned chair and the others on the floor. The students sat in a row on the other side leaning against the wall, as suggested by Sidhanta. People stood watching the proceedings with excitement. They wondered what the wise old minister was up to and how he could find out the culprit!

"Now, my dear students," Sidhanta said in a loud voice, "I request you all to stretch out your bare feet! Be relaxed."

The students sat as instructed by the minister, their bare feet well stretched out. Sidhanta walked by them slowly, his eyes on the students and their feet. Whispers filled the hall and even the king could not contain his feelings! Sidhanta paused



before a student, named Shuntaka. The alert eyes of the great thinker of Mallipuram flitted between the boy's face and his feet. The smile on the minister's face, as he bent low to take a closer look at the boy's face, vanished. His eyes widened, and anger filled his face.

"Get up, boy, you shall deceive us no more!" Sidhanta shouted, pulling the boy up. Palace guards took hold of him.

"My Dear King, here's the thief—the one who stole the trophy and threw it into the Kedari lake—an act of envy, no doubt," Sidhanta told the King.

* * *

"Your Majesty, since a search of the hostel did not yield the stolen property, I knew it was the act of a boy drowned in envy who had not stolen it for profit. He must have thrown it somewhere so that it is not found. When I inspected the room in the hostel, I noticed near the window a foot-print. It was covered with dried mud and dirt. I knew that the culprit had gained entry through the lake-side, and I guessed he had thrown it in the lake. So I had the waters searched and you know we found the gold trophy. Envy had driven that boy to such an evil act."

"But, Sidhanta," Parakrama asked, "how did you find the culprit? That's what intrigues me!"

"The foot-print gave him

away. I studied the print for a long time. I noticed that the foot had an extra toe! Six, instead of the usual five! That's why I made all the students sit in that posture. The bare feet of the boy gave him away and I knew Shuntaka was the culprit. He was always envious, I hear, of Subuddhi."

"Wonderful, Sidhanta, you are great! The boy shall be dismissed from the academy and banished from Mallipuram. A boy stealing from a fellow-student! This is unpardonable. Sidhanta, you deserve a reward!"

"Noble King, your trust and goodwill are rewards enough!" Sidhanta smiled, and King Parakrama gave a warm shake to his friend and minister.



End of The Mutiny

The greatest military genius of the Mutiny was Tatya Tope. Though a Brahmin who served as Nana Sahib's clerk, he took up arms in order to secure the rights of his master. Tatya Tope had the magic to turn any man into a soldier. He raised regiment after regiment.

Tatya Tope once inflicted a crushing defeat on the British army and chased it for miles outside Kanpur. It is only the darkness of the night that came to the rescue of the British. Their commander, Wyndham, sent a desperate message to Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief of the British army in India.



Sir Colin Campbell reached Kanpur in no time. He had brought a large army with him. Tatya Tope was then in Kalpi town. He fought several battles against Sir Colin's army. His courage and battlecraft surprised the British.



Once when he fell ill, he took shelter with the raja of a small territory. The raja received him with a show of respect. Tatya Tope had complete faith in the raja because he was fighting to uphold the dignity and freedom of all the rajas!

But this raja was a treacherous fellow. One day Tatya Tope was resting in the raja's garden when the Company's men, disguised as gardeners, suddenly pounced on him and captured him. Needless to say, they had been informed by the raja.



"I'm no British subject that you can try me," Tatya Tope declared proudly as he was led by the British to the gallows. "It is a mockery of justice. Who ever has heard of bandits breaking open and plundering a house and then trying the house-owner in the name of law when he resists the bandits!"

Tatya Tope's capture and hanging depressed Nana Sahib very much. Even then he fought on for some time. Then he entered the forests of Nepal. The British tried their best to capture him but could not. Nobody knows what happened to him.



Yet another great hero of the Mutiny was Raja Kunwar Singh, the ruler of Jagadishpur in Bihar. He took up arms at the age of seventyfive. He taught his soldiers the art of guerilla warfare. From tree-tops and from under the bushes they attacked an advancing British troop.

He fought like a young man, riding a dazzling white horse. Once, in a direct battle, a British bullet hit the wrist of his right hand. He fought on wielding the sword in his left hand and controlling the horse with the injured right hand.





After a few days Kunwar Singh realised that the poisoned wound in his right hand was spreading to his whole body. He stood on the bank of the Ganga and holding his sword in his left hand, chopped off his right arm that fell into the water. "Mother Ganga! This is my offering to you!" he said.

He could not stand the effect of the self-inflicted operation. He fell senseless after some time. He died the next day. His younger brother, Amar Singh, took the leadership of the army and fought the British till his fort fell.



The ladies of the Jagadishpur palace stood before the cannons and set fire to the fuse themselves and got themselves blown up. Amar Singh escaped and was never traced.

The Great Mutiny was coming to an end.



THE TIRED PRINCESS

Ratnaprabha, the princess of Ratnapur, was in a mood to play. She ran about in the palace garden like a frolicking deer. After an hour or so, she started playing hide-and-seek with her maids. Another hour passed. Then she jumped into her private lake and swam across it several times. Her maids were no match for her either in running or in swimming.

Emerging from the lake, she devoted herself to plucking flowers. She then handed over the bouquet to one of her maids, Mandakini, and ran into her bedroom and sprawled on a divan.

Marichika, a maid, came in and said, "Your Highness, the lunch is ready!"

"Shut up!" shouted the princess.

"From the way you were running about, I knew that you'll be tired!" remarked Marichika.

The princess did not say anything. But she turned her face away from Marichika. Marichika's comment did not seem to make her happy.

"O dear Princess," said Marichika again, "your speed and stamina would have surprised anybody. I wonder if Himmatsingh, the champion runner of our kingdom, could have surpassed you!"

"Will you please come closer to me?" asked the princess.

Marichika, smiling, went closer to the princess rhythmically.

As soon as she was within her reach, the princess slapped her hard.

"What's this?" asked the surprised Marichika.

"Should I repeat it to let you



know what it is?"

Marichika did not know whether to laugh or to cry. She stood rubbing her cheek.

Just then Soudamini, another maid, entered the room. "Are you feeling exhausted, Princess? I was sure it will be so. Even Azad Vir, our best swimmer, would have been left behind in a swimming race with you!"

"Really? Will you please come closer?" said the princess.

"But is it not time for you to sit for lunch?"

"Will you please first come near me?" reminded the princess, this time in a stern voice.

"Very well!" Soudamini in-

ched nearer. Suddenly the princess planted a slap on her cheek.

"What is this?"

"A slap!"

"Correct, correct." The two maids laughed.

Now Mandakini entered the scene. "Mandakini, can you say why our princess became so tired?"

"It is obvious!" replied Mandakini. "Do you think that plucking so many flowers was a matter of joke? To bend the branches with one tender hand and then to pick the flower with the other—to move from one plant to another with those tender feet—these are exercises that should tire out any princess!"

The princess jumped off the divan and took out a ring and put it on Mandakini's finger. She was ready for her lunch.

While the princess was having her afternoon siesta, Marichika and Soudamini took Mandakini to task. "You liar!" they said, "Does one become tired plucking flowers?"

"I may be a liar, but you are fools! Any princess would think that it is her birth right to be extremely tender. You two girls compared her to a champion



runner and a champion swimmer, implying that she was quite masculine—a tomboy! You were under the impression that names like Himmatsingh and Azad Vir would flatter her! But that only offended her. Had I

been in her position, I would have slashed off your nose and ears!”

Then all the three continued laughing till their laughter woke up the princess! They ran away into another room.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



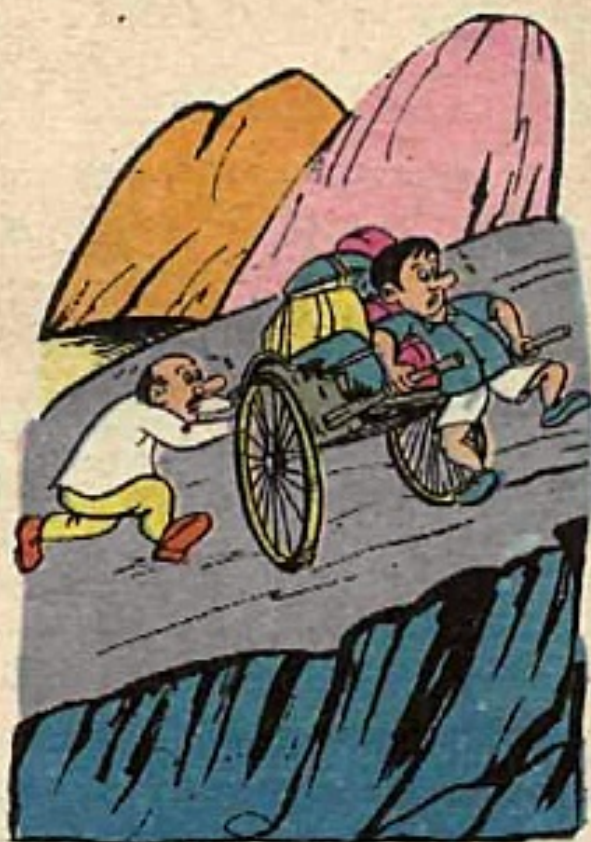
THE CLEVER AND THE KIND

A little boy was struggling hard to push a heavily loaded cart up a hill. A passer-by took pity on him and helped him to push the cart.

When it reached the top and the boy thanked the passer-by, the latter said with some disgust, "Your employer must be a fool. Otherwise he should have known that it was too hard a job for a young boy like you!"

"Sir, he knew. He told me, 'Go ahead. You're sure to meet some old fool who'll help you up the hill.'"

So, some people, unkind themselves, are clever enough to bank on the kindness of others to get a thing done. Their taking advantage of others' kindness does not reduce the value of kindness itself.



ADVICE AT A CONCESSION

A famous lawyer was busy preparing for the court when his clever neighbour burst into his office and asked, "I need your advice. If a dog steals a cake from my shop, will the dog's owner be liable to pay for the cake?"

"Oh yes," said the lawyer.

"Fine. Now, for your information, your dog has just stolen a cake worth one dollar from my shop."

"Is that so?" asked the lawyer. "In that case you can pay me one dollar less for the advice I gave you. Pay me four dollars and be off!"

So, you see, when it comes to cleverness, nobody has the last word. Understanding and goodwill are far greater qualities than wit.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



Suraj N. Sharma

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for April '84 goes to:—

Miss. A. Reid, C/o. Mr. W.A. Reid,
162, Rly. Qtrs. South, Lallaguda, Secundrabad. (A.P).

The Winning Entry:—'Fettered Loyalty' & 'Unchained Liberty'

PICKS FROM THE WISE

"I think not much of yours or of mine: I hear the roll of the ages."

—Alfred Lord Tennyson.

"Every cubic inch in space is a miracle."

—Walt Whitman.

It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous.

—Robert Benchley.

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